

## SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF SIMON BEALE FOR QUEENSTOWN PARK LTD

1. Despite the significant modifications to the indigenous vegetation cover since human settlement, dryland plant communities and habitats of ecological value persist on Queenstown Park Station. These are associated with extensive areas of grey shrubland and the numerous cliff faces and rocky outcrops mostly contained within the Rastus Burn and Owen Creek catchments.
2. The dryland shrubland and grassland communities that covered the river terraces and alluvial fans bordering the Kawarau River in pre-settlement times have been developed into improved pasture for intensive grazing and fodder production.
3. The shrublands that remain today are important in terms of the ecological services they provide, most notably in reducing erosion and in maintaining water quality.
4. A large proportion of the shrubland cover is contained within four SNAs that lie solely within the Station.
5. Chapter 33 provisions of the PDP envisage some development in SNAs.
6. The PDP provides for sheep grazing in SNAs is a permitted activity. Sheep grazing is considered to have a low impact on shrublands and may in some areas be beneficial in terms of controlling invasive herbaceous weed species.
7. Some traditional farming activities however do not maintain, or enhance SNAs and can pose a threat to ecological values inherent to the SNAs.
8. Traditional farming activities such as fire and tracking can lead to an extensive loss of shrubland cover if not properly managed and consequent loss of habitat for avifauna, lizards and invertebrates, including species of conservation concern. These activities can accelerate the spread of weeds causing a decline in habitat quality.
9. Opportunities for maintenance of shrubland and cliff face plant communities is most likely to be achieved through the prevention of fire and avoidance of farm tracking activities especially in the shrublands.
10. Avoidance of these activities is more likely to allow natural regenerative or successional process to occur unimpeded and lead to a dominance by woody indigenous species over woody and herbaceous exotic species or at the least co-existence.
11. Enhancement of the shrublands can be achieved through programmed weed and pest control measures.

12. The extensive areas of shrubland and rugged landforms that occur mostly within the SNAs enhances the degree of naturalness and sense of remoteness in the Rastus Burn and Owen Creek catchments providing opportunities for recreational and tourism related activities.
13. The shrublands contribute significantly to the scenery of the catchments.
14. Recreational and tourism activities are more compatible with the retention and maintenance of shrublands than traditional farming activities.
15. While provision of activities such as mountain biking and walking require the construction of narrow trails ( $\leq 1.5$  metres) or placement of poles or waratahs as route markers, the ecological effects of constructing trails of this width are minor compared to the construction of farm tracks as they involve less vegetation clearance and earthworks. Narrower trails are easier to align around areas of ecological value and are easier to rehabilitate.
16. I understand that the matters raised in my submission have not been addressed by the QLDC Ecologist in his submission and are not in contention.